

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00
SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 CU-04 ACDA-12 DOTE-00 /097 W
-----023058 012034Z /44

P R 011835Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8899
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USEC
USOECN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IT
SUBJ: MASSIVE METALWORKERS RALLY IN ROME DECEMBER 2; VIOLENCE
MAY OCCUR

REF: ROME 18787 AND 17295

1. SUMMARY. PERHAPS 100,000 STRIKING METALWORKERS WILL CONVERGE ON ROME DECEMBER 2 FOR MASSIVE RALLY DEMANDING CHANGE IN GOI ECONOMIC POLICY. STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO JOIN PEACEFULLY IN RALLY, BUT THERE IS WIDESPREAD CONCERN THAT VIOLENT ELEMENTS OF STUDENT MOVEMENT WILL USE OCCASION TO RAMPAGE THROUGH ROME ONCE AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE METALWORKERS' FEDERATION FLM (UNITARY UMBRELLA FEDERATION OF THE THREE METALWORKERS' UNIONS FIOM/CGIL, FIM/CISL AND UILM)
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WILL STAGE A MASSIVE RALLY IN ROME AS THE FEATURE EVENT IN THEIR 24 HOUR NATIONAL STRIKE DECEMBER 2. BY PRESS AND UNION ESTIMATE, 100,000 METALWORKERS WILL BE BROUGHT BY 35 SPECIAL TRAINS AND A HUNDRED OR MORE BUSES FROM ALL OVER ITALY, AND MARCH FROM ROME'S THREE MAIN RAILWAY STATIONS AND THE COLOSSEUM (WHERE BUSES WILL DISGORGE) TO PIAZZA SAN GIOVANNI. THERE THEY WILL LISTEN TO CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU) LEADERS LAMA,

MACARIO AND BENVENUTO, FLM LEADERS GALLI, BENTIVOGLI AND MATTINA, AND OTHERS, BEFORE BREAKING UP FOR A LATE LUNCH.

3. THE RALLY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS A DECISIVE CHANGE IN GOI ECONOMIC POLICY TO END WHAT THE UNIONS CONSIDER ITALY'S PRESENT RECESSION, TO SPUR STAGNANT PRODUCTION, TO REVERSE THE TREND TOWARD MORE-AND-MORE LAY-OFFS AND TO BOOST EMPLOYMENT. (CCU LEADERS MET NOVEMBER 30 WITH OFFICIALS OF THE SIX PARTIES ON WHICH THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT DEPENDS, AND EXPECT TO MEET WITH ANDREOTTI DECEMBER 10). THE RALLY IS ALSO TO DEMAND RAPID CONCLUSION OF LONG-STALLED COMPANY-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS, MOSTLY WITH PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANIES, AND TO REAFFIRM FLM'S STAND IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND AGAINST TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE.

4. LATTER REAFFIRMATION WAS PARTLY AN ALIBI TO WASH FLM HANDS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY VIOLENCE WHICH MAY OCCUR TOMORROW, AND PARTLY A BOW TOWARD PCI AND CGIL, WHICH ARE TAKING EVER-TOUGHER STAND AGAINST EXTREME LEFTIST VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM, AND WHICH FEARED THE FLM RALLY MIGHT STIMULATE RENEWED STUDENT VIOLENCE, DESTABILIZE ITALY'S PRESENT POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENTAL PICTURE. CCU LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY THE CGIL, TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO DISCOURAGE THE FLM FROM HOLDING RALLY IN ROME, AND IS SUPPORTING IT ONLY RELUCTANTLY.

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5. TO COMMUNIST DISTANTE, THE FLM HAS OPENED PARTICIPATION IN MARCH AND RALLY TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENT, AS WELL AS TO FEMMINISTS, PROVIDING SUCH PARTICIPATION IS PEACEFUL. IN ASSEMBLIES AT ROME UNIVERSITY NOVEMBER 29, THE STUDENT MOVEMENT SPLIT IN HALF. THE LESS-VIOLENT ELEMENT WILL CONGREGATE ALONG THE ROUTE OF MARCH FORM ONE OF THE RAIL STATIONS AND MARCH WITH THE WORKERS TO THE RALLY, WHERE THEY WILL TRY TO MAKE THEIR OPINIONS KNOWN. THE INTRANSIGENTS, LED BY OR RESPONDING TO THE INFAMOUS "AUTONOMISTS", WILL ASSEMBLE AT THE UNIVERSITY AND SUBSEQUENTLY TRY TO BREAK INTO THE RALLY, DETACH THE MORE REVOLUTIONARY WORKDERS AND UNEMPLOYED, AND RETURN WITH THEM TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR A RALLY OF THEIR OWN. FEARS ARE WIDESPREAD OF VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN "AUTONOMOSTS" AND FLM "SERVICE OF ORDER" (PREDOMINANTLY TOUGH COMMUNIST WORKERS) AND/OR LOOTING, ARSON, BOMBING AND SHOOTING BY "AUTONOMIST" FLYING SQUADS DARTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THROUGH SECTIONS OF ROME.

6. THE FLM STRIKE IS PART OF A GROWING WAVE OF STRIKES THIS FALL (SEE REFTELS AND PREVIOUS). THEY REFLECT 1) RANK-AND-FILE DISCONTENT OVER INCREASING LAY-OFFS, CONTINUING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, STAGNANT PRODUCTION AND LACK OF GOI REMEDIAL ACTION; 2) UNION PRESSURE TO FORCE CONCLUSION OF LONG-STALLED NEGOTIATIONS OR IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG-SINCE-SIGNED AGREEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (BOTH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC INDUSTRY), ALL OR MOST OF WHICH WILL COST THE HARD-PRESSED GOVERNMENT MORE MONEY; AND 3) FRUSTRATION AND PROTEST BY THE RANK-AND-FILE --AND ITS UTILIZATION BY UIL SOCIALISTS AND CISL'S PREDOMINANT NORTHERN, INDUSTRIAL, RADICAL WING --AGAINST THE "STRAIGHT-JACKET" IMPOSED ON THE UNIONS BY THE "SIX PARTY ACCORD" (IE. AGAINST PCI SUPPORT OF ANDREOTTI AND THE CONSEQUENT RESTRAINT BY THE DOMINANT CGIL COMMUNISTS AGAINST ANY UNION ACTION WHICH MIGHT UPSET THE GOVERNMENT).

7. SEVERAL OTHER STRIKES ARE BEING HELD. THERE ARE NO NEWSPAPERS TODAY (DECEMBER 1) BECAUSE OF A JOURNALIST STRIKE YESTERDAY. CHEMICAL WORKERS ARE ON STRIKE TODAY. A NATIONAL BUS AND STREETCAR STRIKE WAS AVOIDED NOV. 25 WHEN THE GOI AGREED TO FINANCE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE 1976 LABOR CONTRACT. TRAIN STRIKES WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE, OFF-AND-ON, THROUGH THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS UNLESS A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED. THE LATEST ONE-WEEK, HALF-HOUR-PER-SHIFT, STRIKE BY THE POLITICALLY-CONSERVATIVE BUT MILITANT "AUTONOMOUS" RAILWAY WORKERS UNION FISAFS (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE

VIOLENT RADICAL STUDENT "AUTONOMISTS") WNDYED YESTERDAY AFTER
THROUGHLY SNARLING TRAFFIC.HFISAFS PLANS TO CONTINUE
SUCH STRIKES OFF-AND-ON THROUGH DECEMBER. THE RIVAL CCU
RAIL UNIONS HAVE OBTAINED SUPPORT OF OTHER CCU UNIONS FOR A
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NATIONWIDE TWO-HOUR TRANSPORTATION STRIKE DECEMBER 9, WHICH
WILL SHUT DOWN UNIONIZED AIR, TRAIN, BUS, TRUCK AND PORT
TRAFFIC FROM 10-12 THAT DAY.GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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